



**FEMA**

# Disaster News

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## **DISASTER TRAINING PROGRAM REACHES OUT TO WASHINGTON STATE TRIBES**

CHEHALIS RESERVATION, Wa— Hunkered shoulder to shoulder around tables, 22 men and women from six Washington State tribes debate their next move as floodwaters surge through the Roaring River Indian Community, leaving it devastated.

What should they do about the people cut off by floodwaters? The need for emergency food and housing? The false rumors that bubonic plague is spreading like wildfire through a shelter? The accusing questions from the media?

In this case, the Roaring River flood is a simulated exercise, the culmination of a four-day disaster training program offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Emergency Management Institute (EMI). The training class, "Emergency Management Framework for Tribal Governments," is designed to help participants hone their emergency skills and learn how to develop their own plans and strategies so that the tribes will be ready when disaster strikes.

The disaster training course was first offered in the aftermath of 9/11 when concerns about national security became a priority. The class is usually conducted at Emmitsburg, Maryland. The Washington State class represents the fifth time that it has been conducted away from the EMI campus, in the field. The training was held June 5-9, 2006, at the Eagle's Landing Hotel on the Chehalis Indian Reservation.

During the first three days, experts presented a wide range of information, including a discussion of emergency management cycles, risks confronting the tribes, public information, warning systems and the development of emergency operations plan that will serve as a blueprint for future action. Participants also learned about available assistance at the federal level as well as partnering with FEMA.

The fourth and final day of training was devoted to giving the participants an opportunity to apply their newly acquired knowledge to a mock disaster situation.

*FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.*